Ananda Palli:
A Fifty Year History of the Abode of Bliss

1974 to 2024

By Viveka

The Origin

In 1974 our Sectorial Secretary is Ac. Abhidevananda Avt. His outlook is coloured by Baba's ideals and establishing a Master Unit is a requirement. At this time the only Master Units being developed are in India, (Delhi Sector) and this is Sydney Sector. (Baba, our Benevolent and eternal guide changed the name of our sector to Suva Sector in the following years.)

Many people in Australia and New Zealand are attracted to the philosophy, so an LFT training in a temporary setting is set up. The first three month session commenced at the end of 1973. I attended the second session in 1974.

When the first LFT session completed three LFTs were assigned to the task of searching for a property suiting the needs of a Master Unit. The three LFT's were Damayanti, Nala and Gunadiish. Gunadiish was from New Zealand and his horticulture background proved to be a great asset. This search took many weeks. Nala and Damayantii recall the first time they drove on to the property, down the driveway under the cover of the trees. All three, they say, had a strong intuitive flash, saying "Yes this is it!" in unison. The property was secured after inspections and other formalities. They had no idea of where the money was coming from, and hoping all was in order as did the estate agents.

Sharada (later, Brahmapriya) was a retired nursing sister in her 70's who spent years working in India, and was now recently initiated Tasmania. She had a burning desire to serve humanity. When she heard about the concept and value of Master Units she offered the proceeds of her house for that very purpose.

Brahmapriya to the amazement of many, also completed the first three month LFT Training program.

She later moved to Anandapalli and had the strength, capacity, and respect to keep fourteen young adults in line, and was able laugh with them in the process. During this time she was diagnosed with stage-two cancer. She continued living at Anandapalli as long as she could. She reluctantly went to Sydney to receive care and treatment. Baba took her shortly afterwards. Thanks to her kind donation we were able secure this property.

Originally the property was named, 'Punkina Prout Community.' In the language of our first nations people meaning, 'A place of happy dwelling.' (Interestingly the same meaning as the name Baba gave.)

By this time, the second LFT Training was in progress and I was attending. Halfway through SS Dada asks if I would leave for India to do some work. There is also the possibility of seeing Baba in prison. Little did I know the significance of this offer.

I'm asked to work in the Ananda Marga Central Office on Panditiya Rd. which is a rare experience. The level of Intensity is beyond even the experience of LFT training. The Office Secretary is Dada Pranavananda., I'm welcomed with a glass of water and freshly made Indian sweets while my duties are explained. When the introduction is finished, I cautiously request permission to see Baba once my tasks are completed. I only ask once, given Dada's authoritative demeanor and the respect given to his position.

When I complete my work I only have one day before my return to Australia. Through the course of my time in the office and daily discussions with Dada Pranavanandaji, I keep quiet never reminding him of my intense desire to see Baba, yet this thought never leaves my mind.

At the eleventh hour, and late in the evening, like a whirlwind, Dada Pranavanandaji flies into the room giving clear instructions on which train to take to Patna and the address, “You don’t have much time, a rickshaw is waiting”. This means it is happening! Leaving with only the clothes I’m wearing and following he steps He’s providing.

The Naming

The address of the Patna Office where I'm to meet Dada Keshavanandaji (who is the General Secretary) turns out to be a small, two-story school building. But there are no children there.

The day before my arrival Central Bureau of Intelligence agents, along with armed soldiers had stormed the building. They broke the upstairs windows, then pushed large metal lockers out of the windows which landed on the ground with all of their contents spread across the once tidy school-yard.

Harassment by the Indian government towards Amanda Marga is on the rise which is adversely affecting the individual workers, the projects and the supporters and now Baba himself. This demonstrates the degree of fear the ruling government holds of His Ideals and their tenuous positions.

I climb the stairs and meet Dada Keshavanandaji. He's about to depart for the prison leaving a few young LFTs to manage till he returns. He's surprised to see me and doesn’t know why I have come. I take a quick half bath, with help from the LFT’s and a fruitless attempt searching for clothing in the Amurt store room. When I tell him my desire, Dadajii quickly explains that they can only see Baba once a week, each Monday for 20 minutes, and only three people are allowed each visit. Two people are waiting at the jail now and G.S.Dada arrives to join them, making the third person.

“There's no way you will be able to see Baba” Dada assures me. “Last week, a fourth person tried to have Darshan and was denied.“ He asks “Do you know 16 points? Tell me, what is Supreme Command?” Come, we will see.

I answer while running down the stairs and into the waiting rickshaw.

16 Oct,19974

We arrive at the Bankipur Central Jail. The two workers Dada Keshavanandaji spoke of are waiting near the main gate dressed in white. Only Dada Keshavanandaji is in uniform. We were all allowed entry into the jail after a long wait, but just as I stepped inside, I was told only three people are permitted. I was forced to return outside.

Sitting outside for what seemed quite a while. Then I was called to follow the guards back into the interview room of the jail. The interview was conducted by the C.B.I. agents with a close examination of my passport.

Whilst this was unfolding I thought: “This is His prison, this is His jail, and each of us are acting in the drama that He is directing.”

It was the first time I ever experienced this concept.

The three Dada's having only twenty minutes with Baba would now be finished. I thought my chance to see Baba had passed. But then, the Agents finish with their questions, returning the passport told instructing with grunts, to follow the guards to into the adjoining room where Dada Keshavanandaji and two the other Dada's were still waiting. The guards unlocked a door and marched us into the heart of the prison leading to Baba's cell where He’s expecting us.

The first guard slid open a curtain at the doorway of Baba’s cell. It was dark at first but there was a beautiful fragrance is in the air. Though my eyes aren't adjusted to the dim cell, I can make out the feet of the Dada in front of me in satsaunga pranam. I also assume the same position. When I look up I am gazing at Baba's form, lying on His right side on a low cot. The two Dada's and I are at the foot end of His cot. G.S. Dada is kneeling next to Baba conversing softly. Dada Atulanandaji, Baba's Personal Assistant, is at Baba's head, softly massaging Baba's scalp as tears slowly flow down

his cheeks. He advises by motioning, not to massage Baba's body. The pain throughout His body is too great. We can only massage His feet.

Each have turns speaking to Baba. G.S. Dada remains at Baba's head and then motions for me to come. Finally I am next to Baba. G.S. Dadaji tells Baba that this brother is from Australia. Baba asks:

“What is your name?”
“Viveka Baba.”
“And what is the meaning of Viveka?”
“Discrimination Baba. “
“Spiritual discrimination.”
“Yes Baba.”

Baba speaks on other topics, keeping this as brief as possible and focusing only on the naming, Then He says:

“There will a Master Unit in Australia where you will work. And the name is, “Ananda Palli.”

G.S. Dadaji who is at my left side leans in to ask Baba if he had heard correctly repeating what he thought Baba said. This is the 534th day of His fast. He is experiencing much pain thought His body telling me,” *physically I’m undergoing much trouble but you know that Dharma will come out on top.*” His sight now poor and His hearing is impaired Baba Says the words slowly then spelling the words insuring its clear.G.S. Dadaji thanking Baba, He gives the translation: “The Abode of Bliss,” again reassuring that it is clear.

Developing Stages

The property consisted of approximately 90 acres with a small holding added 15 years later. 28 acres in established with stone and pome fruit orchards. There was a small pond that didn't function, two acres of grapes, a packing shed, a small tractor and a small two-bedroom dwelling.

A garden was started and quickly proved difficult without water storage for irrigation, water becomes a priority. Most of our time and energy was in the orchard. Neighbors from above us would stop in asking if we required anything. We needed, instruction in Orchard Management, and they demonstrate until we could show the skill of a beginner. It was only a few minutes but valuable.

Nala said Vinnie Lawer stopped in to give instruction on pruning apricot trees. As he was clipping off the long whippy lengths of new growth Nala was pointing at a brown snake near to his leg, without a break in his informative flow of words he bends down picks up one of the many pruning off-cuts, whips it in the direction of the snake severing its head from the body and continues without a pause. Three neighbors down the hill from us came up at different times introducing themselves and again offering if they could assist. Kris Carnell another neighbor taught me how to graft new wood to change a producing peach tree to a nectarine. We shared equipment, tools, and talents.

Months later, we learned that shortly after our arrival in 1974, a few of the Stanthorpe community members were concerned enough to call together the more conservative towns-folk to air their fears of the these radical elements that sprang up outside of town. The Director of the Hospital Board Dr.Buchanan was in attendance and described to the meeting that he met with Gaotamii Pfeiffer, socially and professionally. She is a nursing sister trained in Canada and married to Viveka, both being the principles of the group you're discussing, and following my interactions with Gaotamii, I can say your fears are without merit.

Satyam and Cetana developed a fruit run in Brisbane after establishing contacts here and watching us drive this 1946 Bedford truck with dangerously loose steering loaded with two and half tons of fruit to sell in Brisbane. It was profitable and took a lot of work. In 1978 Satyam and Cetana with Gaotamii and Viveka purchased the Cold Storage business on the highway. This meant my work load would increase not able to be at Anandapalli fulltime.

Bharat and Sutapa offered to manage the farming in my absense, growing strawberries then working in with larger growers that specialized in stone-fruit varieties new to Australia. Both Bharat and Sutapa's long contribution to the Master Unit broke new ground in the relationships they formed in the greater community. It was hard work and many times they felt the lack of support. Their dedication to Baba's mission inspired those they came in contact with.

Gangada arrival in 1975 and assisted in finding a way to reduce, and if possible avoid, the use of the toxic chemicals that orchardists came to rely on. When researching which was the most practical farming organization, Gangada was adamant the Victorian Bio-dynamic body lead by Alex Podolinksky was the way to go. Gangada's research always proved correct and was confirmed after convincing Alex to put us on his list of farmers to visit on his annual tour and finally meeting with him. He would not resister farms nor organizations, only individuals after first assessing if the applicant possessed the character and understanding, he was very direct and clear when he spoke.

Dada Krpamayananda grew a crop of cauliflowers when posted as Rector Master, assisted by the trainees and Dada Krsnapremananda. Dada's Sutapananda and Krsnashivananda learned the principles of Biodynamic Farming and attended the farming associaitions AGM's in Victoria. As I was able to register the property as Biodynamic if I supervised the B.D. operations, meant our produce in the Brisbane or Sydney Markets carried the Demeter Logo resulted a higher return.

Dada Sutapananda worked off the farm as well as Anandapalli, supporting projects in Bali that he had started and continued for many years. Dada Sutapananda was a leading LFT in Bali in the 70's. The senior workers relied on his position as a local to hold property donations in his name. He was instrumental in establishing many of the projects flourishing in Bali today. Working off the farm he brought many skills and techniques we applied at Anandapalli. He was successful growing Zucchini, snow peas and Truss Tomatoes which the organic wholesalers in Brisbane and Sydney markets relied on because of the consistency. Farm income assisted financially for the maintenance of the many buildings.

A-Frame construction 1976

The first building work was to convert the existing carport into bedrooms. In these early years there were 16 LFT's were at Anandapalli. There was to be one room for the sisters and one for the brothers ussonverting the carport into build bedrooms allowing Brahmapriya her own room. Next was transforming a part of the packing shed into a small DC room. The first building constructed was a meditation room, this was built in the style of the 'A' frame saving on material costs.

Next we divided the packing shed in half providing a brothers quarters at one end and fruit packing at the other. The first family to start the construction of their own home were Giridhara and Ashoka. When almost completed they shifted to Brisbane

Dam construction
small dam in orchard

This home then became Chandrashekhar & Niramaya's Then Satyam's. Giridhara also shifted a detached kitchen from Stanthorpe on the back of our farm truck. I never thought this was possible. This later became Uma House, or the sisters' accommodation which was badly needed. Later an addition was built on to Uma House. The addition was called Kunti's House and this made it a self-contained dwelling. Giridhara & Ashoka's contribution was appreciated especially by the sisters.

The building of Butterfly Bungalow, named by Kapalan and Tarinii's family. They shifted a small caravan next to a shed which served as their start at Anandapalli with all their children attending Mt. Tully School and graduating in year six. Kapalan's life was cut short, I remember him as a quiet, warm and very deep thinking person.

The Dam Filled to Capacity

Mother Kunti (Mother to the righteous) arrived for a visit and fell in love with Ananda Palli. Kunti had been attracted to Ananda Marga sisters in Sydney's Food Kitchen in a Sydney park. She was invited by Guruavati and other sisters on a trip to visit Ananda Palli. It was then that she makes her home at Ananda Palli. Kunti became a great asset to the Master Unit, contributing in any way she could. She established permanent fundraising strategies.

Kunti starts markets up and down the coast where she sold fruit and vegetables. Ananda Palli provided a light truck and the brothers would take turns each weekend driving her to wherever the market was. We would help her set up and she would do all the rest and loved every moment. She had an attractive personality, people loved her, and her customers expected her each week. The brothers that shared the responsibility of helping were required start the drive at 3 AM.

Dinkar was from New Zealand and his name meant "one who brings light." He was a sweet and tranquil person. On their early morning drive a traffic collision took both of their lives. Each of them left behind major contributions and inspiring legacies. The photo is the building of the Glass Sadhana room by

the trainees 1981, well sitting fora photo.

Global Basic Training Centre

The Global Basic Training Center (for training LFTs) was established at Ananda Palli in 1978. The brothers' quarters which shared the packing shed required more space so the packing shed now became the Ashram. A new packing shed and machinery shed was built below the Ashram. The Ashram now required a sadhana room which was an extension built onto the Ashram. Dada Krsnapremananda Was LFT Trainer also GBTC and HPMG from 1992 to 2000 many trainees from here went on to become WT's .

The orchard provied a basic income but to develop this project we needed go beyond this. Realizing by doing, the master unit plays another unseen role, character building. Living together in close proximity and practicing sadhana intensifies both individuals and situations. It takes more more than following your heart.

The best thing for developing our character is to get yourself insulted, so much so that the pain is almost unbearable. Then you have Him, and only Him, he takes you on His lap, only He understands, really understands. He knows your everything and has immense love for you. You discard a part of yourself that you no longer have use for, it hurts, then your sight is much more clear. What was so important, is now not, now your able to be of service. My years at Anandapalli I saw this occurring over and over, but first I had to go through the fire myself. Probably it's more important than the physical or structural development, not only of a master unit, but for us as individuals. The next time you get yourself insulted appreciate the value it presents.

Ananda Palli Primary School

In 1984, a primary school was built at Ananda Palli with loans and donations from Margiis and many years of fundraising. It was called the Mt. Tully School, built at Anandapalli. It was a name that members of the Stanthorpe community could relate to. The initial teachers, Gurucaran and Chandrashekar accepted great sacrifices in bringing forth the vision of Neohumanism. Many teachers that followed

also carried immense weight. While the construction of the school proceeds, a local hall is hired then shifted to the Main Hall at Ananda Palli.

Gurucaran Principle 1984

Chandrashekar Orginized Sohool Bus with Rotary

The concrete slab sat with nothing on it for many years, using it for drying large trays of apricots, children riding bikes and volley ball. In 1980 the unit decided we needed accommodation for our conferences rather then hiring outside retreat facilities. With encouragement from our Sectorial Office we built the walls the walls and roof. Sister Gaunga, who lived on the Master Unit, ı donated funds for the toilet and shower facilities. We had Council approvals each step of th e way. The main hall was also used as the school while the school construction was in progress.

It was hard to hold functions using only the small “Ashram” kitchen so in 1986 plans

Cricket Game on The Slab 1977

Storm in 1991
and
Fire in 1994

1994 a bush fire came up the hill toward Anandapalli with hot, dry and high winds. We were the first property to be adversely affected losing two buildings. Others followed before the day was out. Two thousand hectares were

burnt and a number of structures were gone. The one building here of significance was Butterfly Bungalow. Although it was a rudimentary building, it was all the sisters had. Later it was replaced with a proper structure that even had a porch. The 'A ' Frame roof was also burnt. Also behind the sister's quarters there had been a two-story hay shed that was used for storing drums of biodynamic wheat and hay. Adults loved it as a place to be alone; children loved to play there!

Guru Charan, our senior teacher and respected Margii, lost his garage. There was also serious damage to services, power, water supplies and much of the irrigation used for the trees and crops destroyed. **Planting seedlings with extra help**

In 1992 a tornado removed a portion of the roof and western wall of the Main Hall and damaged the shower block. This happened three weeks before the weeklong Ananda Mela Festival and Summer Conference. Insurance payment was in our account three days after the storm. The same day of the storm a builder came out and gave the quotation for all the work and materials. I told him we would be doing the construction work ourselves before he gave the quote, he said that's fine I'm happy to help. His quote included labor allowing for extra work which needed finishing. Thankfully were able to get all the materials on site before the Christmas break so all that was required was helping hands. The number of margiis that arrived ahead of time to help was more than enough. Never did I see so many working together on one project. The energy He provided during that period made Mt Tully and Anandapalli glow.

The Rebuilding Of Main Hall After Tornado

Graveyard at AnandaPalli

Twelve margii's ashes, at this time, are in tombed at the highest point of the property near the large dam. This piaque marks the site of Manorainjana ashes,{M. Mitchell} drowned while on a Spiritualist Sports and Adventures outing white water rafting. When he did namaskar you could feel it. He was in his third year of a electrical apprenticeship and followed Baba's principles and guidelines without reservation, no matter the setting. The ashes of margiis are listed below.

The Graveyard was a project Gaotamii's. She started working on it in 1982, and maintained the site every year and creating a path defining it by laying broken branches and rocks. A secluded area leading from Gurucharan and Prashanti's house. There was a small hut nearby, about two mitres square where she could retreat to.She would spend a few days at a time reading and long sadhanas, . The children would take her food once a day. Sadhana was better back there, always in a hurry and didn't take the time to go there as offten as I wanted, today I recognise the importance.

Manorainjana	**1983**
Kapalin	**1986**
Cetana	**1986**
Kuti	**1988**
Dinkar	**1988**
Jyotiishvarii	**1990**
Uma	**1991**
Ashutosa	**1994**
Akhilesh	**1995**
Jayanti	**2000**
Gaotamii	**2019**

The Ananda Mela

The Ananda Mela originated undrer the guidance of Dada Krsnasavananda in 1981, Dada slowly built the momentum increasing the numbers. During this time the facilities were minimal we were using the small kitchen in the Dada's quarters and the thought of a commerical kitchen was only a dream and with only one toilet. By 1990 the number of participants had reached three hundred and fifty. At this time we had improved the facilities but had three servings for each meal not having enough seating space.

The people attending aware of the situation and respected the inconvenience posed by the unexpeced numbers attending. Dada Krsnasevananda was transferred a few years latter leaving his position open with other workers doing their best till Kalama accepted the responsibility to take on

the role formimg a committee with the numbers increasing in the years following.

Anandapalli Master Unit

1988

Forty Five Years of Love

When people say that I did so much for Ananda Palli. I feel I was there observing many individuals making their contribution. It's not possible today to recall the countless names and faces of His devotees, who put aside their personal pressures to assist with the development of HIS Master Unit. And, It will be be like this again. Also during these years I was fortunate enough to have someone close by in addition to our Gurudev: Gaotamii, who seemed to consistently maintain one foot in His Sublime world and the other in the physical. Her hand and heart was Shiva's Parvatii.When ever she conveyed the resulting circumstances in our everyday life, be it good or bad, it would always be proceeded by, 'Take Your Guru Mantra'.

The attempt to start the recording of the persons and events of this Project Baba so desired is a daunting task which requies more time and effort. There's so many persons that were not mentioned that now come to mind, and more to come. My apologies please, we can build on this, His, viveka